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## SPANISH STENOGRAPHY

About four years ago was conceived the idea of giving the boys of the graduating class of the Commercial High School of Brooklyn a little intensive work in Spanish stenography. The reason for doing so was the constant demand for graduates who knew Spanish and who could also take down letters in Spanish shorthand. Many of our graduates on visiting us said that the opportunity for better positions was offered to those who knew how to take down letters directly from the Spanish dictation.

We wanted to give our boys this opportunity, but there was no one who knew both Spanish and stenography. Of course we could have dictated the material and had the boys take the notes in their own way, regardless of whether they were getting the right outlines or not. But this, we felt, was not satisfactory. There ought to be some instruction in the correct method of writing the shorthand outlines. This meant that one of the Spanish teachers would have to learn the system.

As I had been a student in the Commercial High School, and therefore knew the Pitman system of shorthand thoroughly, Mr. Harrison, the head of our Spanish department, asked me to take up the work of teaching Spanish shorthand to the boys of the graduating classes. I obtained a copy of "*Taquigrafía Española*" (Pitman). It was necessary for me to master the differences that exist in the two systems on account of the sounds in one language that do not occur in the other. Then I suggested that the boys of the eighth term be supplied with copies of the book.

The first thing to teach the boys was the few differences due to sounds. This was not hard, for all of our boys are quite skilled in stenography, having had at least two years of the subject by the time they reach the last term of school. And as they have also had at least three and one-half years of Spanish, they readily grasp the problems.

In the course of the four or five years that I have been giving the course, I have found that many of the fundamental principles of stenography may be omitted in the teaching of the system to our eighth-term boys. And, although at first I gave the course to all boys in the last class, I soon found out that this was not at all a

good scheme. There were those who could not do the work because they did not have a good enough knowledge of Spanish—I mean those boys who manage to just squeeze through each term of the language.

Therefore, at present, I limit the course to those boys who have had an average standing of 85 per cent in Spanish during their seventh term. In this way I get students who really will profit by their study of Spanish stenography and who probably will make use of their knowledge of Spanish in the business world. This gives me two classes of boys with about twenty boys in each class. They meet twice a week.

During the first and second weeks we spend our time in the consideration of the differences in outlines due to differences in sounds. For example, we use the English stroke for *sh* to represent the Spanish *ll* sound, the English *j* stroke for the sound of Spanish *jota*, the English *ing* stroke for the Spanish *ñ* sound.

Again I find that the large number of diphthongs and triphthongs in the Spanish language causes some trouble. This is overcome by the insertion of the vowel sounds when taking notes; but as this is usually only an elementary trouble, later all vowels are omitted except distinguishing ones. That is to say, there may be two words which have the same consonant sounds, but different vowels. In this case we insert the vowels to distinguish the words, e. g., *ese-eso*; *espero-espera*; *paseo-poseo*; etc. All other points are practically the same in both systems.

Therefore, after some very intensive drill in correct outlines, followed by the memorizing of all important grammalogs and phraseograms, we spend all of our time in attaining speed. By the end of the term the average boy can take fairly difficult matter at 75 to 80 words per minute. Some boys can take dictation as fast as 90 or 100 words per minute.

The procedure for that part of the work is as follows: The lesson is assigned—there are three parts: 1. Transcribing notes from text-book to longhand in Spanish, and on the typewriter (all home work must be typed). 2. Memorizing grammalogs and phrase outlines. 3. Writing in shorthand the Spanish letters in text-book.

On the next day the lesson is heard. 1. Boys hand in their typewritten work. 2. They read from the shorthand notes in the text-book. 3. Board drill on grammalogs and phrases. 4. The letter is dictated to the pupils at the board. 5. They then are required

to read back from the notes at the board. 6. Outlines are corrected. 7. Difficult outlines are explained. 8. The letter is dictated to all boys, who take it down in note-books (the rate is usually 65 or 70 words per minute). 9. Boys read back notes. 10. The same letter is dictated at greater speed. If time permits we dictate faster and faster in order to work up speed.

There are usually about 150 to 200 words in each letter lesson, so that we can dictate the same letter several times in each period. Just before the term closes, I dictate from new matter, permitting the boys to choose their outlines.

I have found that this course, while it does not make any boy an expert Spanish stenographer, gives every boy the ability to take down in Spanish shorthand the average business letter as dictated by the ordinary business man. Quite a few of our boys have been able to secure much better positions because of their knowledge of Spanish stenography. We have found the course to be a very successful one, and one which boys are eager to take up. The appeal from the business point of view is very strong, and the boys strive to keep up to the mark in Spanish in order to be able to take the course in the eighth term. Spanish stenography is indeed a live course, and one which all our schools ought to offer their advanced Spanish students.

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